

MA Semester III (2019-2021)

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Paper- CC10, Unit-I

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Defining the Research Problem

Introduction- In research process, the first and the foremost step happens to be that of selecting and properly defining a research problem. A research problem, in general, refers to some difficulty which a researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation and wants to obtain a solution for the same.

Components of Research Problem are:-

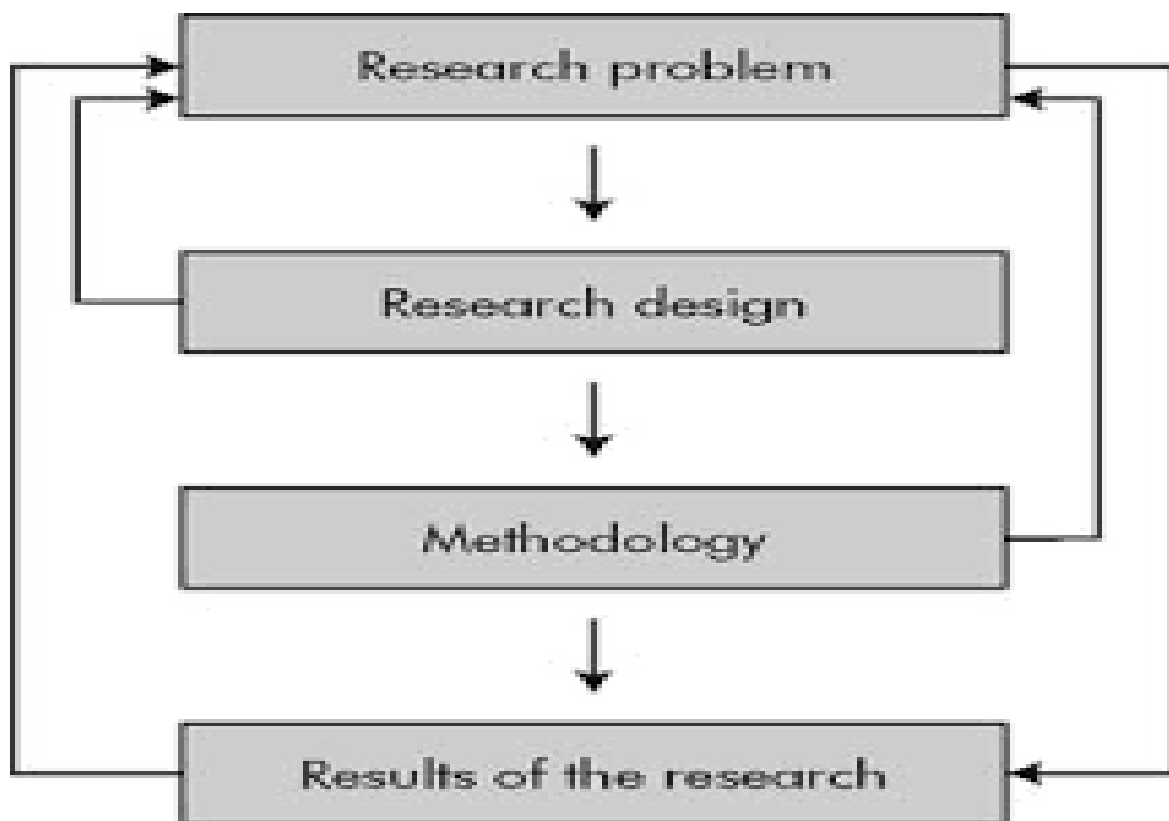
- There must be an individual or a group which has some difficulty or the problem.
- There must be some objective to be attained at.
- There must be alternative means for obtaining the objective (it means that there must be at least two means available).
- There must remain some doubt in the mind of the researcher with regard to the selection of alternatives.
- There must be some environment to which the difficulty pertains.

Thus, a research problem is one which requires a researcher to find out the best solution for the given problem, i.e., to find out by which course of action the objective can be attained optimally in the context of a given environment.

Selecting the Problem:-

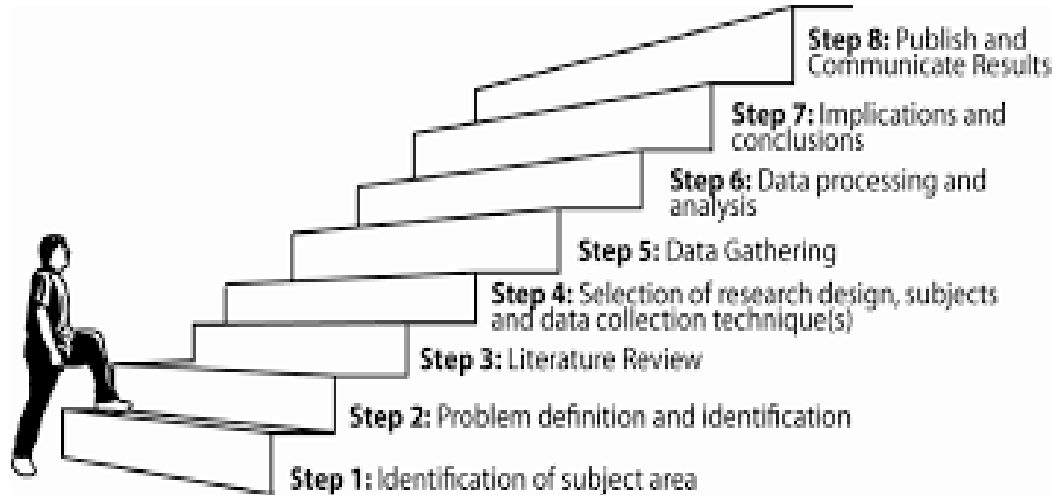
The Research problem undertaken for study must be selected carefully. However, the following points may be observed by a researcher in selecting a research problem or a subject for research-

- Subject which is overdone should not be normally chosen, for it will be a difficult task to throw any new light in such a case.
- Controversial subject should not become the choice of a researcher.
- Too narrow or too vague problems should be avoided.
- The subject selected for research should be familiar and feasible so that the related research material or sources of research are within one's reach.



Techniques involved Defining a Problem:-

- Statement of the problem in a general way.
- Understanding the nature of the problem.
- Surveying the available literature
- Developing the ideas through discussions.
- Rephrasing the research problem.



We may conclude by saying that the task of defining a research problem, very often, follows the sequential pattern- the problem is stated in a general way, the ambiguities are resolved, thinking and rethinking process results in a more specific formulation of the problem.